However, the claims of the later Empire to the final spot prove irresistible. In his ponderously named *Politics and Tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople*,[18] M. Shane Bjornlie provides a new and persuasive perspective on Cassiodorus' *Variae*. It turns out to be a 'tessellated historical narrative' (184), a very purposeful piece of work, undertaken in the aftermath (540s) of Justinian's conquest of the Amal regime (in which Cassiodorus functioned) and illustrative of the tensions between services. Cassiodorus aimed to rehabilitate the Italian elite who had worked for a 'barbarian' regime. Bjornlie divides his work into three parts. First come the *Variae* as 'windows onto painted curtains', poignantly illustrated by the cover depiction of the mosaic of Theoderic's palace in S. Apollinare Nuovo. Much longer are Parts II and III: 'Cassiodorus and the Circumstances of Political Survival', putting the work and its author into their context, and 'Reading the *Variae* as Political Apologetic', which has interesting passages on *antiquitas* and *novitas* in government. Throughout, the author tackles or touches on topics and issues of the age, such as Neoplatonism, the death of Boethius, and the Nika revolt. Readers may find an occasional difficulty ('the lives of Roman emperors were imprinted on the performed text of the natural world', 261) and there are mishaps with 'as such', but this is a rich and durable contribution to Cassiodorus studies.

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Art and Archaeology

'And verily so excellent he was in this perspective, that a man would say, his even, plaine, and flat picture were embossed and raised work.' Philemon Holland's endearing 1601 translation of Pliny's *Natural History* (35.50) is one of the earliest documented references in English to 'perspective', understood as 'the art of delineating solid objects upon a plane surface so that the drawing produces the same impression of apparent relative positions and magnitudes, or of distance, as do the actual objects when viewed from a particular point' (*OED*). The passage relates to a Sicyonian painter called Pausias, whose penchant for representing oxen front-on, and yet conveying all their bulk and size, clearly impresses Pliny. But in a sour footnote, the Loeb edition comments: 'there is no proof that perspective is meant'.[1] It is true that the established text of Pliny does not support Holland's claim that Pausias 'had a singular gift to work by perspective'. With the benefit of Renaissance expositions, Holland presumably knew what perspective was. But did Pliny know – or indeed did any other ancient writer or artist understand the basic principle of a vanishing point? Modern scholarship has

[18] *Politics and Tradition between Rome, Ravenna and Constantinople. A Study of Cassiodorus and the 'Variae', 527–554*. By M. Shane Bjornlie. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, Fourth Series 89. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013. Pp. xiv + 370. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-1-107-02840-1.

[1] H. Rackam, ed. and trans., *Pliny. Natural History Books XXXIII–XXXV* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 352.

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been frustratingly incapable of answering that question, with authorities such as Panofsky and Richter concluding that the geometrical know-how existed, but was not applied, and others (e.g. John White) content to accept that artists understood the principle without needing its formal articulation. Given this aporia, one seizes Rocco Sinisgalli's monograph, *Perspective in the Visual Culture of Classical Antiquity*,[2] with an eager hope that we may resolve the issue. It is a slim volume, and promises that 'key concepts. . .are clarified and enhanced by detailed illustrations' (cover). Alas, the diagrams rarely clarify or enhance the somewhat staccato text; and the central claim of the book, that 'ancient theories of perspective were based primarily on the study of objects in mirrors, rather than on the study of optics and the workings of the human eye' (cover), remains (appropriately, it may be) speculative. If read in a certain way, texts of Euclid and Ptolemy *imply* the use of mirrors by painters. But one has only to glance at the surviving text of Ptolemy's *Optics*, as translated from Arabic into Latin by a twelfth-century Sicilian admiral (*sic*) of Byzantine Greek origin, to see that it is the stuff of a very sadistic Latin Unseen; and that even if Ptolemy's terms *meta* ('destination') or *nutus* ('sign') be sympathetically understood as 'principal vanishing point', we could wish that Ptolemy – and indeed the other authors deployed by Sinisgalli, such as Lucretius and Vitruvius – had expatiated upon the utilization of a vanishing point by artists. The *trompe-l'oeil* trick of linear recession is played often enough in Roman wall-paintings – but that is not quite the same thing, and painters seem not to have been concerned about creating a complete illusion. Sinisgalli imagines Augustus at home on the Palatine, in the Room of the Masks: it is proposed that if the emperor was wearing slippers, with an eye-level at 1.48 metres, and in shadowy light, he would share in a unified 'perspective'. But I fear we are still unsure.

That classical stage-painting or *skenographia* contributed to the development of rendering depth in two-dimensional media has long been accepted. Agatharcus is the painter associated in the ancient literature as a pioneer: self-taught, from Samos, his activity is documented only at Athens (where it is recorded, anecdotally, that he was sequestered as an interior decorator by Alcibiades). But of course stage-set design, along with all things Thespian, developed further in the western Mediterranean. Enlarging beyond our customary Athenocentric focus, the varied contributions to *Theater Outside Athens*[3] include several essays that address the visual and material aspects of Greek drama in Magna Graecia. Tyrants, such as Hieron of Syracuse, were generous sponsors – with one, Dionysius I, priding himself as a tragedian – but the theatre as a civic space thrived regardless of political complexion, and not only at coastal settlements (the theatre of Hippana, at Montagna dei Cavalli, about halfway between Agrigento and Palermo, is one of the recent discoveries discussed here). Oliver Taplin, Liugi Todisco, Chris Dearden, and Dick Green show that there is still plenty to be gleaned from the iconography of Apulian and other red-figure vases, and Bonnie MacLachlan re-examines votive material from Locri and elsewhere with a

[2] *Perspective in the Visual Culture of Classical Antiquity*. By Rocco Sinisgalli. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xii + 195. 106 b/w illustrations. Hardback £60, ISBN: 978-1-107-02590-5.

[3] *Theater Outside Athens. Drama in Greek Sicily and South Italy*. Edited by Kathryn Bosher. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xvii + 473. 50 b/w illustrations, 4 maps. Hardback £70, ISBN: 978-0-521-76178-9.

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view to connecting chthonic rituals and comedy. As the editor claims, the transplantation of Greek culture in Italy is a 'fascinating phenomenon' (15) – and archaeology adds considerably to the literary evidence.

That Greek modes of 'lifestyle' – eating, drinking, domestic furniture, and so forth – were part of 'Roman' identity by the second century BC is amply demonstrated by the archaeology of Pompeii and Herculaneum. And the homely existence of 'ordinary Romans' is the focus of Paul Roberts' *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum*,[4] produced to accompany a British Museum exhibition held throughout the spring and summer of 2013. Homeliness here shows itself an essential component of the 'Uncanny' (Freud's *Unheimliche*): the crowds peering at a Campanian bronze samovar or 'tea-urn', or the carbonized loaf from Pompeii's House of the Stags, are encouraged to 'recognize' an affinity with distant ancestors while shuddering to think of catastrophe – horror both remote (in possibility) and yet 'at home'. Roberts sets 'the urban context', then organizes the archaeological material according to the articulation of the atrium house. Some of the recent finds from Herculaneum are included amid a gathering of mostly well-known objects; the text adds a rich commentary on all manner of minutiae, from how the Romans cleaned their teeth to the gastronomic procedures for fattening up dormice.

Assessing the demography of Pompeii and Herculaneum, it is estimated that children under the age of ten made up around 20% of the population. This may be cheering to know before we approach Jason Mander's *Portraits of Children on Roman Funerary Monuments*[5] – in which it is estimated that half of all children in the Roman world died before they reached the age of ten (and we recall that Vergil's vision of children put on the pyre by their parents [*Aen*. 6.307 f.] has them numerous as autumn leaves). A catalogue of almost 900 tombstones – many of them lodged in museum storerooms or gardens – provides the database for a study whose title immediately raises the question: in what sense can we expect the funerary image of a child to be a 'portrait' of the deceased? Unless parents were particularly melancholic in outlook, no documentary likeness will have been commissioned; and it is a well-noted feature of classical sculpture that images of children (e.g. the sons of Laocoon) tend to show them simply as mini-size adults. With this corpus of material, the problem is compounded by the technical limits of 'provincial' sculptors. The sentiments of funerary inscriptions on tombstones from Upper Pannonia can be plangent and poetic; but the carving of facial features, whether on marble or some rougher stone, is generally so coarse and frontal that Mander's search for 'emotion' and 'affectionate families' seems over-optimistic. Nonetheless, he succeeds in showing that the high incidence of juvenile mortality did not mitigate its traumatic impact upon parents; and that while '*mors immature* was a tragedy for the families…for us it throws open a treasure-chest of information' (155), about demographics throughout the empire.

Of all the Roman provinces, the region eventually denominated as Gallia Narbonensis held a special place in (Roman) collective consideration: even by Caesar's time it was referred to as *provincia nostra*, and for Pliny (*HN* 3.31) it could

[4] *Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. By Paul Roberts. London, British Museum Press, 2013. Pp. 320. 250 colour illustrations. Paperback £25, ISBN: 978-0-7141-2282-3.

[5] *Portraits of Children on Roman Funerary Monuments*. By Jason Mander. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013. 130 b/w illustrations. Hardback £80, ISBN: 978-1-107-00102-2.

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be summarized as 'more truly Italy than a province'. So perhaps it is not surprising that James Anderson's survey of *Roman Architecture in Provence*[6] draws attention to the consistency of 'Romanization' as expressed by urban development, even in places without colonial status, such as Vaison. Of course it did the region no harm that Trajan's wife, and the ancestors of Antoninus Pius, hailed from Nîmes; however, the creation of Fréjus as a naval base by Augustus, and the settlement by him of many veterans thereabouts, had already ensured an architectural fabric more or less disconnected from local forms. This extended beyond civic buildings: even in the native *oppida*, the atrium house came to be preferred (presumably for its 'eco' aspect of rainwater collection).

By contrast Britannia must have seemed an uncertain possession. Yet the recognition of 'Roman civility' in England's northerly landscape was, as Richard Hingley shows in his *Hadrian's Wall. A Life*,[7] a seminal moment in modern antiquarianism. William Camden, a master at Westminster School, began publishing his *Britannia* in 1586, and its impact was felt beyond the schoolroom. In Jacobean politics, it was a moot point whether the Roman frontier determined an ethnic divide: James I and his poets emphasized that 'No Wall of Adrian serves to separate/Our mutuall love', but English patriots liked to characterize the Scots as (still 'barbarous') descendants of the Picts, forever remote from 'civilized' Roman Britons. All this and much more is retailed in Hingley's chronological account. No doubt the publishers balked at using the word 'Afterlife' in the title, but such is what the book offers: no more than a brisk initial summary of the monument as a feature of the mid- to late Empire, then a detailed narrative of discovery and reception from Gildas and Bede to the creation (in 2006) of 'Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd.' and 'management strategies' for 'the visitor experience'. *Sic transit*.

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Philosophy

The interest in Presocratic philosophy, and the scholarly output on it, have been rising again in the last few years. I start this review with a sample of recent publications in the area. It is easy to expect that Daniel Graham's collection of *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy*,[1] in two volumes, will become a popular tool for the study of Presocratic philosophy (for some qualifications on this expectation see below). The sourcebook aims to present 'the complete fragments and a generous selection of testimonies' for the major early Greek philosophers. English translations (all by Graham himself) are

[6] *Roman Architecture in Provence*. By James C. Anderson, Jr. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2013. Pp. xv + 291. 155 b/w illustrations. Hardback £65, ISBN: 978-0-521-82520-7.

[7] *Hadrian's Wall. A Life*. By Richard Hingley. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012. Pp. xx + 394. 109 illustrations. Hardback £75, ISBN: 978-0-19-964141-3.

[1] *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy. The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics*. By Daniel W. Graham. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xiv + 1020. Hardback £116, ISBN: 978-0-521-84591-5; paperback £62, ISBN: 978-0-521-60842-8.

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